

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application as amended.

Claims 1-48 are pending. Claims 1-48 stand rejected and will be discussed below. Claim 21 has been canceled herein.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that Claims 29 and 35-48 are directed to allowable subject matter. In order to expedite its allowance, Claim 29 has been rewritten to include all the limitations of its base claim. Further, in response to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Claims 25, 35 and 44 have been amended to address the alleged informalities and to more clearly set forth certain distinctive features of Applicant's invention. Applicant therefore respectfully requests these rejections be withdrawn.

Turning to the merits, Claims 1, 2, 4 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,606,668 to Shwed ("Shwed"). Without acceding to the grounds of the rejection, Claim 1 has been amended to additionally recite a communication module for isolating a node by selecting from among redundant communication paths in said digital network. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Shwed and the other references fail to teach this limitation of amended Claim 1. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1, and its dependents, distinguish patentably from Shwed and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 20 and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,119,236 to Shipley ("Shipley"). Without acceding to the grounds of the rejection, Claim 20 has been amended to additionally recite isolating said node from said network

by selecting from among redundant communication paths in said digital network. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Shipley, Shwed, and the other references fail to teach this limitation of amended Claim 20. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 20, and its dependents, distinguish patentably from Shipley and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Without acceding to the grounds of these rejections, Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to recite a communication module for isolating a node by selecting from among redundant communication paths in said digital network. As acknowledged in the Office Action, none of the references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach this limitation. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11, and their respective dependents including Claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12-19, distinguish patentably from Shwed, Shipley, and the other references of record and the rejection should be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 25-28 and 30-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully traversed. Claim 25 recites at least two locking devices, wherein each locking device is coupled to the other locking devices and the security engine, and each locking device is configured to communicate with the other locking devices and with the security engine. None of the references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach this limitation. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 25, and its respective dependents, distinguish patentably from Shwed, Shipley, and the other references of record and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 21 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Without acceding to the grounds of this rejection, Claim 21 has been canceled and Claim 20, from which Claim 21 depends, has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 21 and to additionally recite isolating said node from said network by selecting from among redundant communication paths in said digital network. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, none of the references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach this limitation. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11, and their respective dependents including Claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12-19, distinguish patentably from Shwed, Shipley, and the other references of record and the rejection should be withdrawn.

This application is in condition for allowance and Applicant respectfully requests passage to issue.

Should the Examiner believe that any further action is necessary to place this application in better form for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (T3497-9052US01) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required

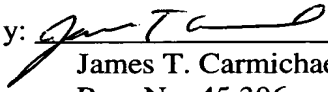
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Attorney Docket No. T3497-9052US01

by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February 27, 2006

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